

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF NORTH CAROLINA  
WESTERN DIVISION  
No. 5:18-CV-480-D

ANGELINA JEAN WELLS,

Plaintiff,

v.

ANDREW M. SAUL,  
Commissioner of Social Security,

Defendant.

**ORDER**

On July 16, 2019, Magistrate Judge Numbers issued a Memorandum and Recommendation (“M&R”) and recommended that the court deny plaintiff’s motion for judgment on the pleadings [D.E. 17], grant defendant’s motion for judgment on the pleadings [D.E. 20], and affirm defendant’s final decision. See [D.E. 23].<sup>1</sup> On July 25, 2019, plaintiff objected to the M&R [D.E. 24]. On July 25, 2019, defendant responded [D.E. 25].

“The Federal Magistrates Act requires a district court to make a de novo determination of those portions of the magistrate judge’s report or specified proposed findings or recommendations to which objection is made.” Diamond v. Colonial Life & Accident Ins. Co., 416 F.3d 310, 315 (4th Cir. 2005) (emphasis, alteration, and quotation omitted); see 28 U.S.C. § 636(b). Absent a timely objection, “a district court need not conduct a de novo review, but instead must only satisfy itself that there is no clear error on the face of the record in order to accept the recommendation.” Diamond, 416 F.3d at 315 (quotation omitted).

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<sup>1</sup> Under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 25(d), the court substitutes Andrew M. Saul for Nancy A. Berryhill as Commissioner of Social Security. See Fed. R. Civ. P. 25(d).

The court has reviewed the M&R, the record, and plaintiff's objections. As for those portions of the M&R to which plaintiff made no objection, the court is satisfied that there is no clear error on the face of the record.

The court has reviewed de novo the portions of the M&R to which plaintiff objected. The scope of judicial review of a final decision concerning disability benefits under the Social Security Act, 42 U.S.C. § 405(g), is limited to determining whether substantial evidence supports the Commissioner's factual findings and whether the Commissioner applied the correct legal standards. See, e.g., Walls v. Barnhart, 296 F.3d 287, 290 (4th Cir. 2002); Hays v. Sullivan, 907 F.2d 1453, 1456 (4th Cir. 1990). Substantial evidence is "such relevant evidence as a reasonable mind might accept as adequate to support a conclusion." Richardson v. Perales, 402 U.S. 389, 401 (1971) (quotation omitted). It "consists of more than a mere scintilla of evidence but may be less than a preponderance." Smith v. Chater, 99 F.3d 635, 638 (4th Cir. 1996). This court may not reweigh the evidence or substitute its judgment for that of the Commissioner. See, e.g., Hays, 907 F.2d at 1456. Rather, in determining whether substantial evidence supports the Commissioner's decision, the court examines whether the Commissioner analyzed the relevant evidence and sufficiently explained her findings and rationale concerning the evidence. See, e.g., Sterling Smokeless Coal Co. v. Akers, 131 F.3d 438, 439–40 (4th Cir. 1997).

Plaintiff's objections restate the arguments made to Judge Numbers as to whether the ALJ properly considered and explained his reasoning concerning the weight that the ALJ gave to plaintiff's residual functional capacity ("RFC") and plaintiff's statements about the severity of her symptoms. Compare [D.E. 18] 8–12, with [D.E. 24] 2–6. However, both Judge Numbers and the ALJ applied the proper legal standards. See M&R [D.E. 23] 3–12. Moreover, substantial evidence supports the ALJ's analysis. See id.; see also [D.E. 21].

In sum, the court OVERRULES plaintiff's objections to the M&R [D.E. 24], DENIES plaintiff's motion for judgment on the pleadings [D.E. 17], GRANTS defendant's motion for judgment on the pleadings [D.E. 20], AFFIRMS defendant's final decision, and DISMISSES this action. The clerk shall close the case.

SO ORDERED. This 5 day of August 2019.

James C. Dever  
JAMES C. DEVER III  
United States District Judge